(viii) 3 combined effluent treatment plants at Wazirpur, Mangolpuri and Mayapuri are being constructed expeditiously which are likely to be completed by May, 2001. For the remaining 12 combined effluent treatment plants, tenders have been invited and contracts are likely to be awarded by December 2000.

(ix) Due to the joint efforts by Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Jal Board and Irrigation and Flood Department, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi have provided 258 mild steel gratings to remove & collect suspended solids.

(x) 75 baffle walls have been erected to ensure removal of suspended solids. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Irrigation and Flood Department have erected 19.5 kilometers of wire mesh barricades on the drains, bridges and on the bank of nallas where jhuggi jhopri clusters are existing.

(xi) Out of 1173 Nallas, Municipal Corporation of Delhi have completed desilting of 1138 Nallas and work is in progress in 21 Nallas.

Central Pollution Control Board is regularly monitoring the water quality of river Yamuna.

Deforestation in the Country

655. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the total percentage of deforestation in the country during the last five years; State-wise;

(b) what has been the effect of this deforestation on the environment and weather in the country; and

(c) what steps are being taken to prevent such deforestation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Forest Survey of India assesses the forest cover of

the country biennially using satellite data. During the last five years assessment of forest cover of the country has been done twice and published State of Forest Reports, 1995 & 1997. During this period, a loss of 5248 sq. km has been noticed which constitutes 0.01% of the forest cover. The details of loss of forest cover in various States as per State of Forest Report, 1997 in comparision to State of Forest Report, 1993 are given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below)

(b) The effect of deforestation on environment and weather in the country has not been qualified.

(c) The major steps taken by the Government to increase the forest cover are:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State/UT Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.

(iii) Guidelines to all State/UT Governments to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands.

(v) A net work of protected areas has been established.

(vi) Recently, Ministry has prepared a National Forestry Action Plan to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through improvement in investment for conservation and development of forest resources.

Statement

Comparative account of forest cover of State/UT in 1995 and 1997. Assessments (sq.km.)

State/UT	
Andhra Pradesh	−3,822
Arunachal Pradesh	−19

State/UT	
Assam	−237
Bihar	−37
Kerala	−2
Madhya Pradesh	−3,969
Manipur	−140
Meghalaya	−57
Nagaland	−70
Orissa	−166
A&N Islands	−2

Census of Big-Cats

656. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any enumeration or census in respect of Big-Cats in different Reserves and Sanctuaries had lately been undertaken; if so, the results thereof;

(b) whether any decline in their population has been noticed, if so, to what extent; and

(c) the steps taken to effectively conserve and promote wild-life especially the Big-Cats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The census with respect to Tigers and Leopards was last undertaken in 1997 and Lions in 1995. The Population of Lions as per 1995 Census is 304. The Population of Tigers and Leopards in different States are given in the enclosed statement-I (*See* below).

(b) No, Sir.